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ABSTRACT

The Pennsylvania State University Commission on External Degree Programs studied the context of and the mandate for external degree programs at Penn State. Recommendations cover six areas: (1) Establishment of Extended Degree Programs for parttime students; (2) Establishment of admission, residency and graduation requirements for parttime degree students; (3) Educational counseling and advising for parttime and fulltime students; (4) Credit by examination and credit for life experiences for parttime and fulltime students; (5) Learning resources and media; (6) Recommendations related to fulltime student programs. A 131-item bibliography is included. (MJM)

The Pennsylvania State University
Final Report
August 28, 1972

Commission on External Degree Programs

ED 087290

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COMMISSION ON EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Final Report

August 28, 1972

From the Report

Extended Degree Programs for Part-time Students--Page 10

"The Commission considers extended degree program opportunities for part-time students not only appropriate but imperative for the University, and urges colleges and their faculties at all campuses to provide them."

Degree Programs for Full-time Students --Page 30

"Many of the features which are discussed in the context of degree programs for part-time students are also appropriate for the full-time matriculated students. Mechanisms should be studied by the University which would permit them to move in and out of the University system without jeopardizing their matriculated status."

Preface

The Commission on External Degree Programs was appointed by President John W. Oswald in the Spring Term, 1971, to study the nature of "external degree programs," their appropriateness to Penn State, and to suggest courses of action. Dr. Edward V. Ellis, College of Human Development, was named chairman of the Commission by President Oswald.

Concurrently, at the request of President Oswald, the Deans of each College of the University appointed separate committees to study the same topic from the point of view of their disciplines, and to relate their work to that of the University-wide Commission.

To provide a broad base of understanding, the Commission held open meetings, distributed copies of its minutes to the Deans of the Colleges, to the chairmen of the college committees, to offices of the University Faculty Senate and others in the University community, in addition to the members of the Commission. Similar distribution was made of study papers, working papers, committee reports, and other documents.

The Final Report of the Commission was sent to President Oswald on August 28, 1972, including a set of Appendices which are referred to in the Report. Because of the length of these Appendices, they are not included in this printed report. Copies are available for reference at Pattee Library, University Libraries, University Park, Pa.

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Introduction

The term "external degree" means many things to different people. It is ambiguous. In general, it has come to be synonymous in a popular sense with much of what critics say is needed for reform in higher education. On a national level, efforts are being made to clarify the term, but to date no definition has been generally accepted. There appears to be consensus only on general objectives which are to introduce increased accessibility to and flexibility in the programs of higher education. Such general objectives are long-standing themes in the historical development of public education in the United States.

What passes for an external degree program at one institution bears little or no resemblance to others in organization, administration, clientele or learning process. In many cases, the features of external degree programs at some colleges and universities are considered by others to be conventional and traditional, already having been built into the on-going educational programs. Others have been tried before at other institutions and discarded. External degree programs, therefore, are, in large part, an interpretation by an individual, an institution or a

group of institutions of how the objectives of accessibility and flexibility might be furthered. Their interpretation frequently is based on the perspective of the institution. Where the initiative has not been taken by the institutions of higher education, the state or other agencies from their own perspectives have tended to move in, capitalizing on one or more of the features.

In general, these features include: extension of higher education to persons who do not now participate in its programs; expanded roles for counseling and advising; increased use of examinations to validate learning, however achieved; increased use of instructional technology (television, film, computer assisted instruction, et al); modified admissions and residency requirements; increased emphasis on individualized instruction as compared to classroom and laboratory presentations; cooperative programs among institutions, and others. (Appendix A)

Perspectives

None of the major features of "external degree programs" which were studied by the Commission are new. What is new is the emphasis placed on some of them.

Principal among these in the United States is the increased emphasis on education for out-of-school youth and adults. The history of education abounds with statements of the needs of adults to continue their education throughout their lives. Contemporary statements frequently use the term "life-long learning." Society, for the most part, has provided institutionalized educational benefits for children and youth. The effort and resources required to provide for the education of our youth has preempted in the past the adequate development of systematic higher education programs, including degree programs, for adults.

Viewed in this context, the only significant difference between "external degree programs" and their historical precedents is the growing acceptance of the need for continued education for adults and an apparent willingness on the part of society to make a commitment to them. The Higher Education Act Amendments

of 1972, for instance, make part-time or half-time students eligible for all Federal student aid programs. Higher education thus moves to accommodate that segment of society which for various reasons cannot participate in the conventional full-time resident educational experience.

In addition, some features of "external degree programs" are intended for the conventional college age population. What is advocated is that a number of educational programs or portions of them be "externalized" for those students who might benefit from them. Individualized and work-study programs are frequently mentioned. Proposed also are degree-earning opportunities in whole, or more frequently in part, in environments other than the conventional residential campus. Mechanisms are advocated, too, which would permit the conventional college-age student to move more freely in and out of the residential system as he pursues a degree program. Moreover, some features of "external degree programs"--improved examination procedures, for instance--are seen for at least some of the resident degree students as methods to complete requirements or achieve specified achievement levels in less than the usual term of study.

Still other features of "external degree programs" are directed to all students in higher education, whether of conventional college age or not. Principal among these are those related to instructional services, methods and techniques. Educational counseling and advising is of central concern with close relationships suggested between the counseling and the academic advising functions; the measuring of educational achievement in ways other than conventional credit hours and terms of study is a consideration; continued improvement of examination and testing processes is advocated especially as a means of measuring prior educational achievement; and alternate modes of instruction--including what is frequently called instructional technology--are given major attention because, as creatures of improved transportation and communications technology, they tend to facilitate the "individualizing" and "externalizing" of some educational programs. The

Commission's study of "external degree programs" has tended to dramatize the existence of these alternate modes, their potential, and their present but limited application in higher education.

The Commission does not intend to suggest that its study of the nature of "external degree programs" turned up only old issues and fads. It did not. The new emphasis in education on the combined features of "external degree programs" is appropriate in some segments of higher education, as is a systematic treatment of them. It is imperative that each institution of higher education react positively, giving attention to those features which have been slighted.

The Penn State Context

It is the Penn State Commission's view that this new emphasis is best achieved at Penn State as a part of the evolution of our educational process. For most of the features of "external degree programs" which are examined as a part of the Commission's study already exist at Penn State. Under policy statements adopted by the Board of Trustees, the University already is a statewide institution with responsibilities to "part-time" students of all ages as well as traditional full-time degree students of conventional college age. Beginning with agricultural extension programs, the University gradually extended its educational programs off-campus, first with occasional classes in temporary locations. Later as the programs expanded, the University opened extension centers from which credit and non-credit programs were offered by the various colleges. These in turn became campuses where expanded full-time student programs were offered. Each campus in turn extended its programs as well as the programs of the total University system to the service area in which it was located. (Appendix B)

To assure a uniform academic standard, the programs for the full-time and part-time students operate under the same University-wide academic policies. Each of the colleges has integrated academic policies working through one faculty supplemented by part-time

instructors for all of its programs. The dean of each college provides administration and control of academic aspects of the policies through assistant or associate deans.

To support the academic organization, two major administrative instructional delivery systems have evolved, one for full-time degree candidate students and the other for part-time, non-degree students. In general, that for full-time is most frequently referred to as resident instruction and that for part-time is continuing education and extension. Both report to the Provost. The central management of the delivery systems comes from the University Park Campus, and is coordinated through the director of each of the Penn State campuses. He in turn has assistant directors reporting to him for the programs of the full-time resident students and those for part-time continuing education students. The two major systems provide primarily classroom type of instruction but are supported by a range of learning resources and educational media of extraordinary diversity for alternate modes of instruction.

Penn State's two major instructional systems and their capabilities for alternate modes of instruction (computer assisted, correspondence, television, etc.) comprise an educational potential comparable to that of any organization in the country. The University's twenty-two campuses throughout the state, its area offices, its libraries--many equipped with learning carrels--its sixty-seven county extension centers, and access to and experience in working in facilities of public schools, libraries, and government buildings offer a ready-made and probably unparalleled educational distribution system almost ideally suited to the operation of programs for students who are not able to participate in a full-time residential college experience at one central campus. (Appendix G)

The breadth of the commitment of the University to students "external" from the central University Park Campus is awesome. While descriptive materials about "external degree programs" include discussions of "learning centers" as a point of educational guidance

or tutoring, Penn State already has these learning centers through its statewide campuses, most of which were established years ago in anticipation of the educational needs of the state.

The service to the external student goes beyond establishment of fixed facilities, however. In addition to its full-time degree students at the various campuses, the University--through its colleges--offered credit work in 1970-71 in the Commonwealth at 168 different locations with a part-time student enrollment of more than 38,700. Another 5,500 were enrolled in certificate and diploma programs (900-series courses) at 41 different locations. About 60,000 were enrolled in conferences, workshops, and other informal non-credit programs. Independent Study by Correspondence enrolled almost 23,000. In addition, the College of Agriculture, through its Extension Service, conducted 39,626 educational meetings attended by 1,332,266 persons. It also recorded 750,350 instances of individual assistance. Because of the range of educational opportunities provided in the past by Penn State to the part-time student, the Commission regards degree-earning opportunities for them as only an evolutionary step in the total program of the University. The step can be accomplished with adoption of the proposed university admissions and residency requirements for part-time degree students.

The University has made a significant commitment already to the part-time student, although not as extensive as for the full-time resident student. The varying degrees of commitment are understandable when viewed against the tradition of higher education of the past which was characterized by the lack of national and state resources available for instruction for part-time students, faculty responsibilities which have been heavily oriented toward resident instruction, and a reward system for faculty which is supposed to recognize achievements in instruction through continuing education, but in practice frequently does not.

These, too, are themes of earlier times and can be read in past reports of the University Senate's Committee on Continuing Education.

The Penn State Mandate

The need for extending degree earning opportunities through part-time studies to the people of the Commonwealth can be documented in the tenor of the times and in the rapid and continuing growth of continuing education in each of the colleges. There is a mandate for such opportunities. The Commission, however, does recommend caution and care as the University acts on its recommendations. Missing at this time is conclusive evidence of a large number of external students who would commit themselves to a long-range educational goal, such as a degree. (Appendix C)

The evidence is lacking at both the national level and at Penn State although the number of students enrolled in certificate and diploma programs at Penn State, and the results of a continuing education study in fall term, 1971, suggest that the clientele is there. There is sufficient reason to believe that the lack of evidence is more a result of little or no availability of degree opportunities than the interest and capabilities of the potential students.

To this point the Commission in its report has limited its discussion of "external degree programs" to the clientele which cannot earn degrees through full-time residential experiences. The work of the Commission, however, has touched on broader issues in the University. The studies show the need for a new approach by colleges and departments in planning their short-term or long-term programs, whether for full-time or part-time students. Planning of these programs from the initial steps should consider the needs of all of the campuses, the total resources of the University, and the myriad of alternatives in the instructional process.

The Commission believes that a promising approach is in instructional design where attention is given from the beginning not only to what should be taught, but how, why, where and to whom. Examples of the present range of instructional design decisions include the specialized resources of the various campuses, the use

of various special project courses which stimulate independent study and research, an honors program, and work-experience programs which relate the community to curricula and courses. There are many more examples, and the range of design choices increases with the new emphasis on use of instructional technology. Access to such resources at Penn State is unprecedented. Research and demonstration projects which have been conducted at Penn State and elsewhere clearly show the potential for expanded use of these alternate modes of instruction.

It also is significant to note the example of the Capitol Campus offering educational programs adapted to suit individual needs. Graduation is based on completion of a unified program rather than a specific number of courses or credit hours. In addition, the Capitol Campus has developed educational procedures to help alleviate the articulation problems of graduates of the community colleges and associate degree programs of Penn State. The new experimental bachelor of philosophy degree at University Park is another example. Even more recently, the University Council proposed a new University calendar which would include brief sessions within a 10-week summer term for highly concentrated periods of learning. Such an approach for all terms could facilitate, in the Commission's view, the educational programs of the new part-time degree clientele as well as the full-time student.

As the number of choices in design increase, there will be increased need for counseling and advising for students of all ages, and for utilization of sophisticated testing and examination procedures. Both are central to instructional design. (Appendix E and Appendix F)

The National Commission on Instructional Technology provided insight to the need for instructional design in all of education by offering a view of the future: "Instructional technology is more than the sum of its parts. It is a systematic way of designing, carrying out and evaluating the total process of learning and teaching in terms of specific objectives, based upon research in human learning and communication and employing a combination of

human and non-human resources to bring about more effective instruction. The widespread acceptance and application of this broad definition belongs to the future." (Appendix G)

It is the Penn State Commission's view that the future is now, and that the recommendations which follow will lead to that future.

The recommendations are in six parts:

A. Establishment of Extended Degree Programs for part-time students.

B. Establishment of admission, residency and graduation requirements for part-time degree students.

C. Educational counseling and advising for part-time and full-time students.

D. Credit by examination and credit for life experiences for part-time and full-time students.

E. Learning resources and media.

F. Recommendations related to full-time student programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Extended Degree Programs for Part-time Students

1. The Commission considers extended degree program opportunities for part-time students not only appropriate but imperative for the University, and urges colleges and their faculties at all campuses to provide them. Such degree programs are defined as any existing or new degree conferred by The Pennsylvania State University to persons who do not follow totally the traditional full-time residential college experience. The degree would be conferred in recognition of satisfactory completion of a prescribed regimen of learning upon students who are in some measure external to the campuses and the full-time traditional residential patterns of American higher education.

2. The Commission believes that a multiplicity and diversity of degree programs for part-time students is preferable to a singular approach. Because of the nature of the University and its statewide organization, an opportunity exists to provide a broad range of programs which are responsive to the needs of the people rather than only one or two which would meet only the needs of a limited sector of the population. With a unique concentration of basic and professional educational programs, facilities, organization and administration across the state, the University is in a position to do this. All segments of the University family should have an opportunity to participate in providing the programs within the stated mission of the University and the standard of quality of Penn State programs.

3. Multiplicity and diversity should apply also to the instructional modes that are used. To concentrate on only one mode--such as television--would again severely limit the service to the state. Each of the modes should be used in instruction based on its

appropriateness to the instructional objective and its availability in terms of system design, financial resources, and the skill of faculty and staff in using it effectively.

4. Among the student groups to which the faculty, departments and colleges should give special attention are those who do not now have access to degree programs, and others who do not participate fully in life through lack of educational opportunities. Special programs of remedial work for youth and adults who do not qualify academically for the programs should be undertaken, and existing remedial programs should be expanded.

5. Degree programs which are proposed by faculty, departments and colleges for part-time students should ultimately include degrees at all levels. Although most of the deliberations of the Commission concentrated on undergraduate degrees, the Commission feels there should be no barriers to consideration of advanced degree opportunities for part-time students. Colleges and campuses of the University also should be encouraged to experiment with offering existing and new associate degree programs to part-time students.

6. The planning of degree programs for part-time students requires not only the statement of educational content and objectives, but also a consideration of learning resources and the alternatives for system design which they suggest. Faculty, departments and colleges should have access to and should work with personnel who are knowledgeable in the total range of design and planning.

7. The question of resources availability and allocation is critically related to program design and should receive consideration at an early stage of any design effort. The administration of the University should begin immediately to seek to identify financial resources which could be committed to programs which are proposed. Care should be taken to avoid (1) the injury to necessary existing programs through diversion of resources and/or (2) the introduction of

new programs which may be inadequate because of insufficient financial resources.

8. To assure adequate use of existing resources and wise use of new ones, the University should view degree programs for part-time students within a context which might be expressed as providing:

   a. Existing programs in existing instructional modes for existing students.

   b. Existing programs in new instructional modes for existing students.

   c. Existing programs in new instructional modes for new students.

   d. New programs in the new instructional modes for new students.

   e. Etc.

9. Such a context recognizes the capacity of individuals to prepare for change, the capacity of institutions to accept change, and the capacity of society to marshal resources to support change. It recognizes, too, that a major aim of any program is to bring the continuing vitality of the traditional and the conventional to bear upon the present, and that the instructional requirements of the many educational programs of the University vary. What is appropriate for one is not necessarily appropriate for another. The context also recognizes the present availability of instruction on a statewide basis at the campuses, through resident and continuing education classes, through correspondence study, University of the Air instruction, and other modes. Because of these, it is apparent that new provisions for admissions and residency are the only steps necessary to allow the immediate establishment of degree programs for part-time students in several curricula.

RECOMMENDATIONS

B. Admission, Residency and Graduation Requirements

The Commission proposes requirements on admissions, residency and graduation for the part-time degree student which differ from those for the full-time student. For instance, a part-time student could not be admitted to degree status until after satisfactory completion of 18 credits. A college which wishes to offer existing or new degrees to part-time students would use the new requirements, thus retaining for the University as a whole the flexibility of maintaining those admissions and residency requirements which are particularly suited to the full-time student.

At the level of an associate or a baccalaureate degree from Penn State, the Commission proposes the following admissions requirements.

1. The applicant should be a high school graduate, or the equivalent. Equivalency would be indicated by completion of a GED diploma program or the satisfactory completion of formal educational programs in the military service or elsewhere which could be accepted as the equivalent of a high school program, or a combination of formal courses, job experience, and maturity which would be acceptable in total as equivalent to high school graduation.

2. The applicant should complete at least 18 credits in college credit courses (including day or evening courses, credits by examination, transfer courses from other institutions, independent study, etc.) and should have attained a minimum grade average in these credits equivalent to a "C" average (2.00).

3. Beyond the above admission requirements, the applicant must have the approval of an appropriate University representative regarding the potential of the individual applicant for success in the degree program to which admission is desired.

4. It is recognized that some programs may require certain specific prerequisite courses before admission to degree status for the individual.

5. Advanced standing admissions would provide for transfer of applicable credits from full-time and/or part-time programs.

6. Prior attendance at other institutions must be reported at the time of application for admission in order to provide opportunity for advanced standing, although academic standing at the other institution should not of itself be a deterrent to admission to a part-time degree program at Penn State.

7. Maintenance of degree admission status would require that the student maintain a satisfactory (stated) grade point average. Failure to do so would require reversion to non-degree status, and the individual would have to be readmitted to degree status again when evidence of satisfactory scholarship has been resubmitted.

8. Students enrolled in degree programs would be expected to maintain their degree status admissions either by regular annual renewal of intentions or actual enrollment in courses at least annually. Failure to provide either renewal of intentions or to enroll in courses would require that the student revert to non-degree status and be readmitted to the program.

The Commission proposes for part-time students the following guidelines in lieu of traditional residency requirements.

9. At least 50 per cent of the total number of credits required of part-time students for a degree program from Penn State must be taken in courses under the jurisdiction of Penn State academic departments or from other institutions involved in formal consortium arrangements to which Penn State is committed.

10. In fulfilling the minimum "number of credits" requirement from Penn State, all courses and credits offered by the University which meet the specific degree program requirement would be accepted regardless of location or method of instruction involved. Such courses might be completed through continuing education classes or resident instruction classes by correspondence instruction, computer assisted instruction, educational television, credit by examination, etc.

11. As degree programs are developed for part-time students by any college of the University, provision should be made for a period of synthesis, apprenticeship, or scholarly learning experience. The provision may be satisfied by such activities as

    (a) planned seminars or symposia, conducted under the supervision or with the approval of the faculty for the program, (b) participation in approved individual-tutorial, or team-tutorial programs or situations, (c) scholarly internship or apprenticeship programs, (d) combinations of the above and/or other approved activities. The proposed new University Calendar with provisions for brief concentrated periods of study facilitates this requirement.

    In the context of the synthesis process, the Commission feels that alternate ways should be available for the student to satisfy this requirement to provide the greatest flexibility and accessibility for the individual student.

The Commission proposes the following guidelines for graduation requirements for part-time degree students.

12. To graduate, a student must satisfy the curriculum requirement and earn at least a "C" (2.00) average for all courses taken under the jurisdiction of this University.

    A student may repeat a course in which he received a grade of "D" or "F".

A course in which a grade of "C" or better was obtained may also be repeated provided written approval is obtained from the student's advisor and appropriate academic office. All scholastic and curriculum requirements applicable to a given student are those in effect at the time of the student's most recent admission to the University.

13. A candidate admitted with advanced standing must earn at least a "C" (2.00) average for all courses taken under the jurisdiction of this University.

14. There shall be no time limit specified for completion of degree requirements by a part-time student as long as the student maintains a reasonable continuity of effort and progress toward the fulfillment of the degree.

15. Any approved degree program for part-time students will conform to the University regulations concerning maximum and minimum credit requirements for baccalaureate programs.

16. The Commission has no specific proposals for admissions, residency or graduation requirements on advanced degrees for part-time students. It recommends that a separate committee be appointed through the Graduate School to propose to the University Faculty Senate the general requirements for advanced degrees.

17. In addition, the Commission believes that some of the recommendations which follow are applicable in part to full-time students. Reference is made to them in some of the recommendations. At the end of the report, the Commission also has made recommendations on courses of action related to the full-time student.

RECOMMENDATIONS

C. Educational Advising and Counseling

The colleges should regard educational advising and counseling as a key element in any program, regardless of the student's presence on campus or off. The Commission recommends the following guidelines:

1. Educational advising and counseling should be viewed as an integral part of each student's program. The educational advising and counseling function should include an awareness of the student's needs for information about programs, the educational process, and assessment of personal goals in terms of age, mobility, manpower, and financial conditions.

2. Educational advising and counseling should take into account the varied characteristics and experiences to be dealt with by students within the framework of a total university.

3. Educational advising and counseling should consider the varying needs of students in terms of life styles, and should perform a role in facilitating student transitions (i.e. from part-time non-degree status, to part-time degree status, to full-time degree status.)

4. Educational advising and counseling should be provided to all students part-time and full-time, degree and non-degree, with special attention directed to adult students in each of these classifications.

5. Since the learning patterns of adults are different from those of 18-24 year old students, special consideration should be given to educational advising and counseling for the adult student, ensuring that guidelines for study skills and study habits are an aspect of the counseling process.

6. In the initial development years of degree programs for part-time students, the Commission recommends that

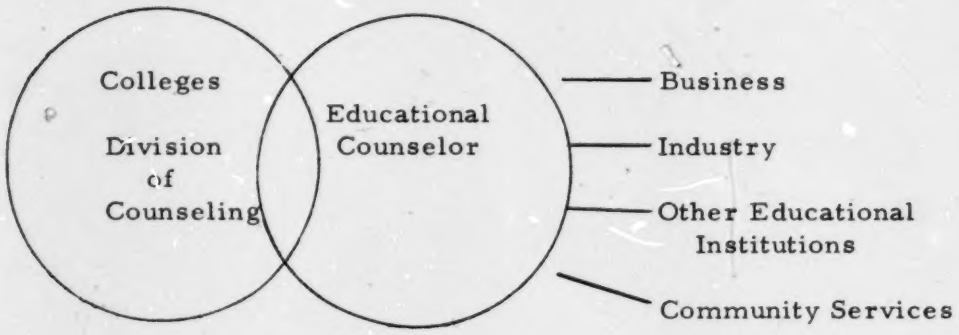
educational counseling and advising be provided through pilot projects already designed by the Division of Counseling and the Office of the Vice President for Continuing Education in order to gain a body of experiences from which to make long-term decisions. In the pilot projects such services will be available to all part-time students enrolled in credit courses. Upon satisfactory completion of 18 credits and admission to degree status, the student would be assigned to an academic advisor who would work with the counselor in guiding the student through his program.

7. The Commission also recommends that appropriate University offices consider long-range proposals by its Committee on Educational Counseling and Advising which concern the relationships between the counseling and advising function. A study of these recommendations might take place during the current explorations of a University College.

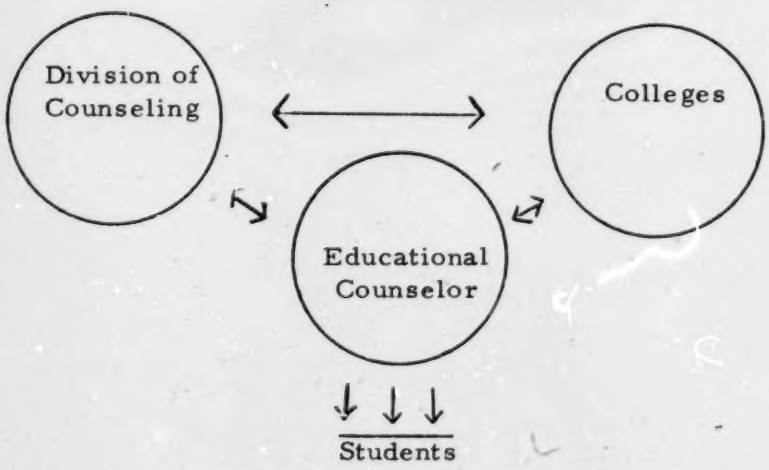
   a. To meet the needs of a large student population (including part-time, full-time and part-time degree students), it is recommended that educational counseling and advising services be consolidated into an educational counseling team and that educational counselors be added to existing specialized personnel in order to accommodate the numbers of students to be served.

   b. The existing structure responsible for counseling (the Division of Counseling) and existing structures responsible for advising (the Colleges) should be given a set time period in which to formulate plans for such consolidation.

   c. To improve their effectiveness it is recommended that educational counseling and advising services also provide community or regionally based information regarding community services, other educational services, both public schools and higher education institutions, and business and industrial opportunities. Structurally, this will take the form of:



d. To provide a staff especially trained to handle these various responsibilities, it is recommended that new positions be created for educational counselors to supplement existing specialized staff. Such educational counselors would be educational advising and counseling generalists while the Division of Counseling personnel would be counseling specialists and the college personnel would be advising specialists. On a functional level, the educational counselor would be related to both the Division of Counseling and the colleges. Thus:



It is further recommended that the educational counselor in conjunction with the existing counseling and advising services be responsible for coordinating or offering services in the following areas:

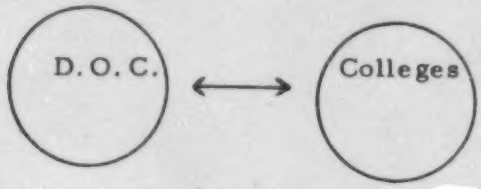
- dissemination of academic information and procedural assistance;
- personal goal setting on an ongoing basis;
- test administration and interpretation including advance placement, achievement, ability, interest, and aptitude;
- financial aid information, advice, and procedural assistance;
- information on educational delivery systems for full-time and part-time degree programs;
- information about educational options: programs available within the University, programs available in other institutions, and non-degree approaches to vocational and personal objectives;
- assistance in building study skills and good study habits;
- information about learning support systems and assistance in choosing options appropriate to individual needs and capabilities (i.e. library, speed reading, media systems, etc.);
- information about changing manpower needs;
- adjustment counseling;
- placement information and procedural assistance.

e. To promote flexibility without discontinuity in educational advising and counseling services, it is recommended that a system be developed through which non-confidential records such as current transcripts would follow a student from one

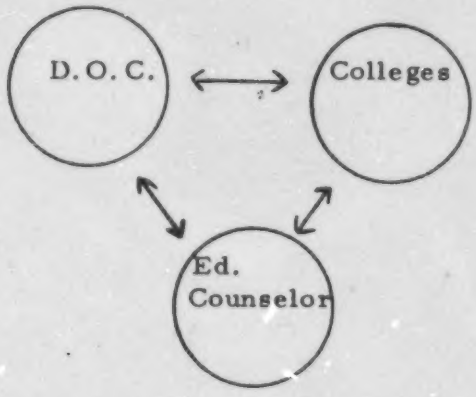
University learning site to another to be used in the educational advising and counseling process.

f. Since educational counseling and advising is an integral part of each student's program, the following progressive time frame for implementation is recommended:

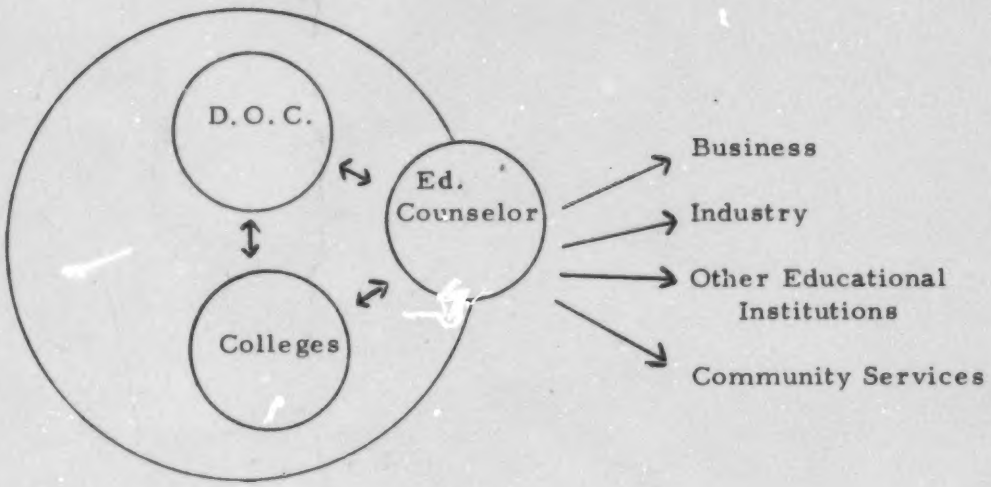
0-1 year planning, delineation expectations, formulation of policy.



0-2 years add educational counselor.



2-15 years gradually develop the educational counseling program to meet student and regional needs.



D. Credit by Examination and Credit for Life Experiences

The range of opportunities for credit by examination already are extensive at Penn State. They include opportunities for examination prior to admissions, for advanced placement during the admission process, and for departmental examinations during the period of the student's matriculation at Penn State.

Although the opportunities are extensive, they are not widely used nor is information about them widely known to the people of the Commonwealth, the students, faculty and staff of the University. In addition, financial resources for the development of departmental examinations are limited.

The Commission offers the following recommendations for the benefit of all students of the University, full-time and part-time:

1. The University should examine the desirability of consolidating in the Division of Instructional Services the various testing and examination services of the University.

2. The colleges of the University should make maximum use of the numerous provisions and procedures we already have at Penn State for gaining credit by examination. To facilitate maximum use of these opportunities, adequate resources should be made available.

3. Pre-admission examinations, such as College Level Examination Program (CLEP), and such others as are recognized by the University should regularly be offered at all campuses. Some campuses already provide this service on a monthly basis.

4. The University should develop a massive campaign, both on campuses and off, to publicize the wide range and the great variety of provisions already existing at Penn State, for gaining credit and meeting require-

ments through examination. In this, the provisions of Rule E-3 of the Student Handbook should be featured. At present the provisions of the rule are far more liberal than the practice; and full implications of the Rule itself are not recognized on campus or off.

5. The University Faculty Senate should be asked to interpret Rule O-6 of the Student Handbook:

> "Examinations given for the purposes of granting credit under conditions stated in Rule L-4 shall be based on the standard of work required of students enrolled at this University."
>
> The following statement needs particular attention:
>
> "Work for which this credit is given must be in courses accepted by the University." In practice, this often leads to a very narrow concept of "comparability" which rules out a course that achieves the same ends as one of our "regular courses," yet that does not match it in details of syllabus, procedures, etc. This narrow interpretation of "comparability" likewise rules out new courses set up specifically for degree programs for part-time students in areas where there are no "courses accepted by the University." In effect, this statement under scrutiny is often interpreted as giving the colleges (or departments) a veto power which could badly hamper the implementation of degree programs for part-time students. Such a narrow interpretation of Rule L-4, moreover, would seriously hamper the process recommended in this report for granting credit for life experiences.

6. The Colleges should experiment with granting credit for life experience using procedures which are relevant to the program or degree. Examples of procedures include written examinations, demonstrations or exhibits as in the arts, and oral examinations by appropriate committees.

7. A central office should be designated to closely monitor the development of statewide agencies and other procedures for administering credit by examination, keeping all colleges and academic officers of the University informed.

8. The University Faculty Senate should be requested to examine the feasibility of utilizing the examination programs offered by other agencies in the Northeastern Region--such as CPEP of New York, New York Regents' External Degree Program, and Edison College of New Jersey.

9. Financial resources should be provided to the colleges to assist them in developing departmental examinations. The departments should be encouraged to work with the examination section of the University Division of Instructional Services. This office should regularly inform all segments of the University of the courses which are available through departmental examination.

E. Learning Resources and Media

A surprising result to emerge from the investigation by this Commission is that while the University has at its disposal an extraordinary range of resources and innovative instructional technology, the faculty is generally unaware of the full extent and variety of facilities available and therefore inefficient and ineffective in their utilization. Our recommendations therefore embody steps to correct this situation.

1. The dean of each college and the Graduate School should appoint a Committee on Educational Design, with membership representative of University-wide responsibilities. Its charge would include:

   a. A study of existing degree programs to determine which, if any, should be made available for part-time students.

   b. A study to determine whether new degree programs for part-time students might be desirable.

   c. Continued study of existing and planned degree programs to determine what new instructional design concepts might be appropriate for full-time and part-time students.

   A copy of a suggested design model (Appendix I) should be made available to each of the committees, as well as a copy of the complete report of the Commission, including appendices.

   A representative of the Division of Instructional Services and a representative from the Division of Learning Resources and Media should be made available as consultants to each of the committees.

2. The Chairman of the Council of Academic Deans should periodically include on the agenda of the Council a discussion of the work of the college

committees, thereby providing a mechanism for exchange of information among the deans.

3. The Commission recommends that a working committee be appointed to foster a wider awareness of the resources and media currently available and to encourage more general utilization of them. Its activities would include the preparation of a handbook for academic program planning which would list (1) resources, services, and media available for program planning and development at Penn State, in the region, and in the state, (2) capabilities, advantages and weaknesses of each, (3) individuals or offices where expertise in program development, including media utilization, is available, and (4) realistic guidelines for estimating the financial and time investment required for various forms of system development.

4. Minor adjustments should be made to facilitate the degree programs for part-time students using existing programs in existing modes.

   These include:

   a. Increased coordination of University Libraries which emphasize the availability of basic library services at all campuses for instruction through either the resident or continuing education system.

   b. Strengthening of Audio-Visual Services in its relationship to Commonwealth Campuses so that basic services are readily accessible for instruction through both the resident and continuing education systems.

   c. Moving ahead rapidly to establish a University Park bookstore. This facility is needed as a focus for improved bookstore services, especially for the part-time student, at other campus locations. Central coordination would provide the flexibility which is needed in textbook orders for the part-time student.

5. The University has been a pioneer in many promising innovative instructional projects using new technology. These have emerged through research and pilot programs. Most were the result of the efforts and interests of individuals or small groups of individuals. No mechanism exists for applying the research findings on a scale from which Penn State could generalize their usefulness for the University-wide system. The Commission therefore proposes that a Commonwealth Campus be designated as an instructional laboratory where full-scale demonstrations of technology, delivery systems and media can be applied. The campus so designated would serve as a "bridge" to University-wide application of the most promising projects rather than have them shelved for lack of attention.

6. Because of high initial and development costs of some of the alternate modes of instruction, the Commission recommends that a substantial effort be made to develop materials which will serve multiple instructional uses. In addition, the Commission recommends that the University investigate cooperative arrangements with other institutions and organizations, including the State Department of Education, in order to further extend the utilization of programs and increase their cost-effectiveness.

   The University of the Air might become an inter-institutional statewide broadcast system with joint production of materials and distribution through the Pennsylvania Public Television Network; inter-institutional patterns for use of cable television technology might be developed; explorations of satellite distribution capability could be undertaken; the facilities costs for delivery of computer-assisted programs might be shared among institutions so that a complete delivery system may be achieved. The Commission recommends that a course of action be taken on these explorations.

7. The Commission also recommends that the course development section of the University Division of Instructional Services be strengthened into a major resource for the faculty in program planning and

development through (a) administrative commitment, (b) financial support and (c) improved procedures for new program evaluation by the Senate Committee on Curricular Affairs and the University Council.

8. The Commission recommends that the University Faculty Senate, through its Faculty Affairs Committee, investigate the impact of a wholly new concept of educational systems upon faculty attitudes and loyalties We must recognize that a greater reliance upon non-conventional media will tend to alter (in some ways) the educational process, to reduce the individual faculty member's ultimate authority over how his subject matter is taught, and that economic considerations may require that the more costly instructional packages be developed and utilized under cooperative programs with one or more outside institutions. Though at first examination the effects may appear negative, if a faculty member's first loyalty is indeed to his field and his profession rather than to his institution, then wider utilization of programs may actually offer real benefits to the professor, the institution, the profession and to the student, in spite of the inherent hazard of standardized, statewide educational programs with their spectre of centralized "thought-control."

F. Degree Programs for Full-time Students

1. Many of the features which are discussed in the context of degree programs for part-time students are also appropriate for the full-time matriculated students. Mechanisms should be studied by the University which would permit them to move in and out of the University system without jeopardizing their matriculated status.

2. To achieve this the Commission recommends that the University Faculty Senate be requested to make an immediate review and take action through its appropriate committees relative to regulations governing the full-time degree student in regard to (a) residence (E-3), (b) time limitation (E-5, E-14, E-15), and (c) accreditation of the colleges' courses through continuing education classes and independent study by correspondence. In addition consideration should be given to the granting of credit for short-term instructional programs such as conferences, workshops, seminars, and others.

3. In keeping with the overall recommendations for degree programs for part-time and full-time students, the Commission also recommends that a review be made of the current methods and criteria for categorizing graduate and undergraduate students and that adjustments be made to reflect the Commission's proposals.

4. The Commission also recommends that the centralized and integrated record-keeping system for students (e.g. grade reports, transcripts, etc.) be adjusted to reflect the Commission's proposals.

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